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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED

*Presented by
Robert Porter*

AT THE OPENING OF

MORRISON COLLEGE,

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY,

NOVEMBER 4th, 1833.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN O. PEERS,

President of Transylvania University.

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LEXINGTON, November 6, 1833.

THE REV. B. O. PEERS—Sir, the Trustees of Transylvania have appointed us a Committee to make known to you their gratification at the dignified manner with which you conducted the ceremonies of the Commencement; and to request a copy of your Inaugural Address for publication.

We avail ourselves, Sir, of the occasion thus afforded, to express to you our congratulations on the prospects of Transylvania, and our fondest hopes that with your untiring zeal in the cause of education, the public will realize all we have promised them at this institution, and that while it is under your guidance, it will have that support from an approving community, which, while it consoles, will reward you for your indefatigable labours.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of our Cordial support, in what belongs to us, as guardians of the Institution.

F. L. TURNER, }
BENJ. GRATZ, } *Committee.*

LEXINGTON, Nov. 7, 1833.

Gentlemen:—In compliance with the request contained in your note of yesterday, I send you "a copy of my Inaugural Address for publication."

It affords me great gratification to learn that the Trustees were satisfied with the manner in which the commencement was conducted.

Accept of my sincere thanks for your cordial expression of kind wishes and your assurances of support; such assurances I pledge myself, shall not fail to have their effect. I am with sincere respect,

Your obedient Servant.

B. O. PEERS.

F. L. TURNER }
AND } Esqrs.
BENJ. GRATZ, }

ADDRESS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—We hail you welcome to this Building! Reared as it were upon the ashes of its predecessor; whilst with thankfulness to Heaven we exchange our congratulations; let us dedicate it to the cause of Letters, which is at once the cause of God and of Humanity. Nor let us fail to pay a passing tribute to the memory of our distinguished benefactor by means of whose munificent bequest this splendid edifice has been erected. It were superfluous as well as inappropriate, on the present occasion to attempt the eulogy of Col. James Morrison. This task has been performed by one, whose eloquence, though now his tongue is mute in death, can never be forgotten by many present who have often felt and owned its power. Long may this building stand a visible monument of the bounty of its founder, and still longer may his memory be affectionately cherished in the hearts of a grateful community.

The copiousness of the subject to which I propose to call your attention, denies me the privilege of further preamble; I therefore address myself at once to the business before me, of making some plain practical remarks on the subject of *Intellectual Education*.

In the course of these remarks I shall endeavor to show, That all rules, expedients and methods of the intellectual artist, that is, of the educator, should be derived not from tradition or usage; but directly deduced from the laws of mind:

That one of the greatest defects of the system of instruction ordinarily pursued, is, the giving the pupil too much assistance, or rather, assisting him the wrong way; his teacher

and his books giving him without any trouble to himself except that of recollection, the results of thought, which he might be and therefore ought to be taught to elaborate, (at least to a much greater extent than is usually thought practicable,) by his own exertions; the instructor merely showing him *how to work*, but he himself performing the labor:

That in the course of self-education spontaneously followed by very young children under the instructive guidance of nature, we shall find the best possible criteria, both as relates to the subjects, order, and methods of study; by which to regulate our practice in their subsequent education:

That in accordance with this principle, the subjects attended to by children in the incipient stages of education, should be just as various as the classes of objects around them inviting their notice; the order being determined by the relative proximity or accessableness of the objects, affording thereby an opportunity for using the methods which should be almost exclusively employed, viz: observation and experiment; the whole being accompanied by incessant oral and written expression:

That the natural sciences, whilst they have a greater inherent value than is generally admitted, are, in addition to branches usually attended to, appropriate studies for early boyhood; and should be taught upon the Rensselaer system which, with the exception of extent, is as practicable with boys as with youths approaching to maturity:

And, finally, That the course of education recommended by these principles, besides being more favourable, both to extent and accuracy of knowledge, will ultimately cause a youth to become intellectually, a more original, independent, and efficient man.

If we contemplate a new-born infant, and the young of any quadruped, we shall by the closest observation, be able to discover little difference between them except in physical structure. But if the same be compared in a state of maturity, the difference is immeasurable. The greatest man living was in early infancy more helpless, and perhaps more ig-

norant than the horse he rides, was, at the corresponding period of life. His present superiority though ascribable in part to native advantages, is owing in a good degree to education; for grown men have been found "wild in the woods" but slightly elevated above the beasts around them.

As great a contrast is presented us, if we compare the individual himself in manhood, with what he was in infancy. Napoleon, who wielded the sword for the conquest of nations, was once unable promptly to carry his hand to his mouth. Sir Isaac Newton, whose vast mind seemed to aspire (and with much success too,) to comprehend every thing in the heavens and on the earth, was at one time so ignorant as to have *to learn* the simple fact that fire would burn him. This amazing transition from helplessness to power, from ignorance to knowledge, is entirely the product of education. Not that I ascribe creative power to education. This it does not possess. It exerts only a modifying influence. For the existence of our faculties we are indebted to the Creator, but their first manifestations and subsequent development we owe altogether to education. Nature imparts to us susceptibilities, but these susceptibilities, unawakened by external objects must lie forever dormant. Suppose the case of a mind equal to that of Newton, encased in a body destitute of senses; no eye, no ear, no taste, no smell nor feeling; whatever might be its native superiority, (if we can affirm inequality of minds) it must of necessity remain unknown to others, and, so far as we have means of judging, unknown even to itself. Mind like the electric fluid, lies dormant and unperceived till it is excited into action and notice as it were by the attrition of external objects.

Hence we may learn the nature and objects of education. Did man enter the world in a state of full maturity both of body and mind, as was probably the case with our first parents, there would be no occasion for education; that being accomplished by nature, which now devolves on circumstances and art. But he is ushered into being, in a condition the farthest possible removed from maturity. Without an idea,

without a sensation on which to base an idea, he commences his career in a world filled with innumerable objects inviting his acquaintance, and a knowledge of whose properties is essential not only to his well-being but even to the preservation of his existence. To give him this knowledge, to direct him in the formation of this acquaintance, and to qualify him by a course of superintended practice, for the independent use of his various faculties; in short to convert the infant into the man, is the important business of education.

From this view of the subject, it is evident, that, although the process of education begins with the very first sensation, and continues until death; (the entire course of life being nothing more than a protracted course of education;) it is only with reference to that period which intervenes between birth and manhood, that I propose at present to consider it. This may be denominated the period of education. It is the probationary stage of life; the time allotted by nature for preparing to participate in its busy scenes. How preposterous then, to attempt to accomplish in two or three years, that for which God has assigned a period of twenty. How absurd the pretensions of all those who presume to dispense with time and labor in the tardy process of education. Universal analogy testifies that every thing of importance is of deliberate growth. Nothing is so pernicious in intellectual culture as too great haste, and yet nothing is more common. Were the growth of mind like that of a mineral, by external accessions piled on by foreign causes, the case might be different. But it resembles rather that of an animal, whose increase is the result of the assimilating action of its own powers; and the animal constitution forced either by disease or art into premature magnitude, is never healthy.

Our inquiries are to be subjected to still another limitation. The progress of education during the period specified, is in a great degree spontaneous. The mind possesses naturally a self-educating tendency, from which it results that its development is commenced and carried on in some form or other, without the aid and direction of art. Within a

very few months after the birth of an individual, his mind begins of its own accord to notice and classify objects according to the impressions which they make upon the senses. In a short time too, it begins to associate ideas with sounds, and the tongue is employed as an instrument for holding communion with other minds, a species of intercourse which continues through life, and exerts the most powerful influence on the intellectual character. This may be called the education of circumstances, in which surrounding objects and persons are the principal teachers. It is a work that must and will go on. This is the fiat of nature with regard to which we have neither option nor power. We may modify it in its progress, and we can do nothing more. Every child will be educated some how or other; whether well or ill, depends on art. Education in this sense is in a great degree involuntary and fortuitous, and my principal object is to ascertain how far and in what manner this process of self-development may be assisted and guided by artificial measures.

To devise and administer these measures devolves upon the educator, whose first object should be to ascertain the nature of the task assigned him, and the methods by which he may accomplish it. To determine this he should study to know precisely what nature herself has done, and what she has left for him to do. He should try to understand exactly what he can do, that he may attempt nothing impracticable; assuming it as a postulate, that in what he can do, he has a measure of what he ought to do; in other words, he must carefully study the properties of mind, and the laws by which its operations are guided. The educator is an artist just as much as the sculptor or the carpenter, and fitness for his business as naturally presupposes an acquaintance with the material or subject, in which certain changes are to be produced, in the one case as in the other. The business of education consists of an art and a science, the art having its foundation in the science of mental philosophy; and he who neglects the latter, cannot, with any degree of skill and success, conduct the former. The phenomena of intellect are

just as independent of our will, as those of matter. We can no more control nor determine the influence which certain causes and modes of treatment shall have upon the mind, than we can make it depend upon our inclination, whether water shall evaporate or freeze on the application of caloric. Supposing then, we proceed in the work of cultivating the mind, ignorant of its laws; success if attained at all, would be accidental; and on the contrary, if we act in defiance of these laws, success would be miraculous. The Baconian maxim therefore, that "to conquer nature we must obey her laws," is as true of mind as of matter; and hence the invariable criterion by which the instructor should be guided in judging of all expedients proposed for the cultivation of mind is, their accommodation, or want of accommodation to its laws.

Here it may not be inappropriate to remark, that the science of education is to a surprising degree, ahead of the art. Expressions derived from orthodox theories have almost degenerated into cant. There is scarcely an article written, or a conversation held upon the subject, which does not enumerate correctly the defects of education; telling us that the ordinary practice is almost exclusively adapted to the cultivation of memory, whereas the real object of education is to form the character; to engraft good habits; to qualify an individual to think, investigate, and reason for himself. But Condillac told us this near two centuries ago, and nature and common sense proclaimed it long before the days of Condillac; and yet how tardy has been the application of acknowledged truth to the correction of acknowledged errors. This being the case, the province for improvement lies in devising practical expedients adapted to principles admitted to be fundamental; and the great retarding cause has been, and still continues to be, the fixing upon these in obedience to custom; in making usage, and not the philosophy of human nature, the controlling guide in their arrangement. A system of education consisting of methods deduced from the well known laws of mind, would with reference to its

effects, as well as its structure, strike the world with amazement; and it is pleasing to reflect that this is just the state of things to which the science is tending, as it is that alone to which it must conform just as rapidly as it can be said to improve. Every practical contrivance for the cultivation of intellect, must be in perfect accordance with its laws. The slightest departure from conformity to them, will most certainly be indicated, and ultimately checked or punished, by embarrassment, or failure. We shall as soon succeed in working the metals with wooden instruments, or building a house by beginning at the roof, as in educating mind in opposition to nature's method. This, like all her methods is plain and easy—he that runs may read—children follow it spontaneously. We err because we take pains to err—because we choose to follow our own way, rather than submit to nature's guidance.

In addition to a familiar acquaintance with the principles of mental philosophy; successful teaching requires a clear and correct conception of the object of education. To suppose that it consists entirely or even principally, in the *communication* of knowledge, is a most pernicious error; and yet it is a mistake too, to imagine that it proposes nothing more than the discipline of the mental powers. Every one on commencing his career in life has occasion for a stock of elementary knowledge, as well as to have the free use of his intellectual faculties; the philosophical instructor will therefore aim at the attainment of both these ends. Indeed they are inseparable. A well trained mind destitute of knowledge would be an anomaly, if not a contradiction. In order to impart wholesome discipline to the mind, it must be made to think, and thinking must produce ideas, which constitute knowledge.

The object of education then, according to this view is two fold, viz.; to provide that the student shall lay up as large a supply of useful information as possible, and in such a way as shall give the greatest amount of invigorating practice to the mental powers. Education should be so conduct-

ed as to make its subject a full, exact, and ready man, and that is the best system, which, to the greatest amount of exact knowledge, adds the best command of the faculties God has given us. If this representation be correct, it follows, that the study of no subject, the dead languages, or the more abstruse parts of mathematics for example, need be pursued, *solely* on account of the valuable discipline it affords the mind; but that in determining the studies of his pupils, the teacher may be guided exclusively by a reference to their utility, assured that the rational investigation of any subject whatever, will be rewarded not only by the acquisition of valuable knowledge, but also with an increase of vigour to the intellectual faculties.

Here however, it is proper to remark, that this principle does not operate as some alledge, to the exclusion of the dead languages from a course of liberal education. On the contrary, the argument from utility, is daily acquiring greater strength. As science advances, that assimilating process which commenced with the revival of classical learning, and by which the English is becoming more and more nearly allied to the Latin and Greek, is going on with an accelerated ratio. Already have these fountains been drawn upon to such an extent, that it may be safely affirmed that a large majority of English words in current use are of classic origin. Of the sixteen thousand with which Webster found occasion to enrich his Dictionary, (none of which are given us by Johnson) nine tenths or more, are of Greek and Latin parentage; and so rapidly is knowledge becoming de-professionalized with the progress of popular intelligence, that before the end of the present century we shall need another Dictionary embodying some sixteen thousand more. Nor is this all. Knowledge and language being of necessity commensurate, as science enlarges its boundaries, facilities of expression must be multiplied. We may therefore, anticipate an indefinite accession to the existing stock of words. Whence shall they be derived? From the Saxon? Its resources are not adequate to the demand. It could not have been a copious

language so early as the eleventh century when at the height of its improvement, and half its words have perished since that period. But even were this practicable, it is not expedient. What, in such a case would become of existing derivatives from the learned languages? Shall they be superseded by terms of Saxon origin? This would virtually be creating another dead language which our posterity would have to study in order to gain access to the numberless and invaluable writings of the past and present centuries. But it is useless to discuss this question. It has been unalterably decided, that the principal accessions to the English language, shall be perpetually from Greek and Latin sources. Swift declaimed and practised against this tendency more than a hundred years ago; but with what effect, let the enlargement of Webster's dictionary tell us. What was impracticable then, would certainly be found impossible at the present day. The current has been uninterruptedly swelling its volume and momentum in its onward movement; and it would be easier to dam the Mississippi and divert it from its channel into an opposite direction, than to alter what we conceive to be the destiny of the English language. There is something animating and sublime in the prospect it enjoys of becoming a universal language, and its growing approximation to the dialects of Greece and Rome, rendering more and more intimate its affinity to the French, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Italian and the modern Greek, is calculated to fit it for this glorious destiny.

In view of these considerations, the question is not, *whether* we shall learn the Greek and Latin, which are rapidly experiencing a kind of metempsychosis, again becoming living languages under an English garb, but *how* we shall learn them. Shall we study them in their ancient or their modern dress? It were foreign from my purpose to consume further time in the discussion of this question, but the answer which must present itself to a reflecting mind, is obviously such as greatly to enhance the importance of the etymological argument in favour of the study of the classics, strongly recom-

mending to us an intimate acquaintance with them, as the keys of the language which we speak and write.

It is not enough however, that the instructor of youth have a knowledge of the science of mind, which furnishes the rules of his art, and keep in view the real objects of education; he must be careful lest in applying these rules for the accomplishment of these objects, he do too much for his pupils; in other words, he must carefully avoid overteaching. Extreme attention is almost sure to counteract itself. Hence that method of instruction is the best, which requires the student to do the most for himself, and by himself. It is mistaken kindness which prompts us to work for those who are able to work for themselves. A greater curse cannot be inflicted upon a man, than to *rob*, (I will not say *relieve*) him of the stimulus afforded by the necessity for exertion. Hence it is, that genius is not always a blessing, and that self-made men are, generally speaking, superior to other men. The youth upon whom nature has been most lavish of her intellectual favours, too often resembles those lethargic tribes who live on the spontaneous products of the earth. Universal history and geography declare, that commercial enterprise, intellectual improvement, and national prosperity, are the greatest in those countries for which nature has done least. Of New England it may be truly said, (and it is a matter of congratulation for the West and for the world,) that she is *blessed* with a limited and rocky soil. Since the days of Sicard and Gallaudet, the deaf and dumb have almost ceased to be objects of sympathy; for they are incomparably smarter than the same number of others indiscriminately chosen, and they are made so from the stimulus to mental effort afforded by their condition. Why do we, by our unwise labor-saving methods of education, so often convert the possession of a fifth sense into a misfortune? In administering assistance of any kind, the manner is generally as important as the act, and it may be adopted as a rule invariably true, that all charity which represses or in any manner supersedes exertion is a curse. What should become of Ordos

and Clavises and translations for the advanced student of the classics, if these principles are correct? The philosophical teacher therefore, will make it a point to give his pupils just as little aid as possible. His invariable aim will be to put them in a way to learn for themselves, aware that any assistance beyond this, supersedes personal effort, and consequently weakens the mind. Of course he will never cease to impress it upon the mind of the student, that every thing depends on his own exertions, that he is to educate himself, and that the utmost he can expect from his teacher, is assistance in so doing. The province of the educator is simply to take care that the mind of the pupil be subjected to wholesome discipline till he shall be sufficiently advanced to regulate the culture of his own powers; to exercise a guardian care over his intellect until he is prepared to take charge of it himself. The time of pupilage may be regarded as a literary apprenticeship; and the duties which an instructor owes his pupil the same with those which are due from a master to his apprentices. The apprentice is not *manufactured* into a workman; he is not passive under the hands of his master, as a piece of wood or metal, receiving and retaining any shape that may be given it. In order to learn his trade, that is to acquire the habit of performing certain operations with readiness and skill, he must be active; *he must practice*; and all the advantage of having an instructor at all is, to enable him to practice upon a good rather than a bad plan. His improvement therefore, will be essentially dependent on his own efforts, and will bear an exact proportion to the assiduity and wisdom with which those efforts are expended. All this is rigidly and pre-eminently true of the literary apprentice.

The process of education rather resembles horticulture than manufacturing. The expansive energy is in the plant itself. The gardener can only place it in the soil, and afford it the moisture, light and heat, which experience has taught him to be favorable to its growth; the appropriation of the nutriment provided, and the consequent development, are the results of the action of its own powers.

This is most emphatically the case with the educator. He may place his pupil in circumstances favorable to his improvement; but if the mind be torpid, his labor will be as effectually lost, as would be that of the gardener, if a withered branch, instead of a healthy scion, were the object of his care. All that the teacher can do, and therefore all that he should attempt to do, is to act as an auxiliary to nature. As the physician co-operates with the *vis medicatrix* of the human system, and as the gardener co-operates with the vegetative powers of nature, so must the educator co-operate with the expansive self-educating tendency inherent in the mind.

With what absurdity do these views if correct, clothe those methods of education which depend for the improvement of the pupil, upon his committing to memory the thoughts of other minds. Every item of knowledge from the beginning to the end of education should be a matter of *acquisition*. Nothing should in any case be given which can be earned. Absolute gratuities, here as every where else, are excessively pernicious.

Having made these remarks respecting the part the teacher has to perform in the work of education, and the principles by which he should be guided, I proceed in the next place to consider the employment of the student.

The period of education has been said to consist of that portion of life which intervenes between infancy and manhood. The observations I am about to make relate chiefly to the first part of this period; the reason of which is obvious. It is true in every thing, but pre-eminently so in the business of education, that it is of supreme importance to *begin right*. The process of education from first to last, should be continuous, without any retrograde movements. If a wrong direction be taken in the outset, it is impossible that the legitimate object of education should be achieved. The foundation is the most important part of a building; it is so of the fabric of education. These observations, if founded in truth, reprove the too common practice of committing the instruction of children to any one competent to teach them to as-

sociate certain sounds with certain marks. This practice is not one of the least injurious results of the habit of regarding education as a mechanical process, in which the workman does every thing and the material nothing. It is doubtless true of a painting and a statue, that the first daubing, and the rough hewing may be done by any one, but that the finishing touches can be imparted only by the gifted and experienced artist. The very reverse of this is emphatically the case in relation to the mind. As the character of the tree depends upon the treatment of the twig or scion, so the matured man is but an expansion of the boy. It is in the very commencement of education if any where, that philosophy is needed. To follow the direction once taken, and to continue habits once formed, is comparatively an easy task. The individual will in all probability do this spontaneously. But to choose the direction that is right, and to lay the foundation of habits which it is desirable to have strengthened, require all the judgment which philosophy and experience united, can command.

Until these views shall be practically recognised as true, that reform in education which is so desirable, and perhaps I may say so much desired, will be utterly impracticable. The university cannot make thorough professional scholars, because of defective college education; the college cannot in its limited portion of time, remedy the defects of grammar school instruction; and the grammar school should not be held responsible for the errors of the A. B. C. department. Here then, is the source of the evil, and consequently the place to apply the correctives.

The great practical question for the teacher to ask in the outset of education is, what are the studies in which children should be engaged with a view to the attainment of that knowledge which shall be of greatest service to them in after life? and what are the habits which it is advisable to impart, for the purpose of qualifying the individual for future self-management? And here he has peculiar reason to felicitate himself, upon having an answer furnished by an infalli-

ble oracle. No one ever commenced the instruction of a child who did not immediately discover that he had already been to school, and to the very best of teachers. The truth is, every man's education is *begun right*, because *begun by nature*; and we fail in our efforts at education just in proportion as we refuse to make the school of nature, a model for the school of art. The very best specimens that the world can furnish of philosophical education, are the product of the methods employed for the instruction of the deaf and dumb. And why? Simply because the authors of the system were wise enough, or were constrained by circumstances, to learn from children themselves how children should be taught; in other words, they consented to *follow nature*.

But why should the possession of a fifth sense be suffered to revolutionize the mode of education? This circumstance is rather pregnant with additional reasons why a method of instruction proved to be signally successful in the one case, should be sacredly followed in the other.

Assuming it therefore, as self evident, that the course prescribed by nature is the best which art can follow; we have only to ask, what is the intellectual employment of young children; and why is it that they prosecute with such remarkable success, the work of self-instruction? The answer which the most superficial observation furnishes to this is, that *all* the objects of the material world immediately *around them*, organic as well as inorganic, vegetables animals and minerals; all the properties and attributes of matter, number weight elasticity &c.; the actions of persons as indicating motive and character, together with language, or the association of certain sounds with ideas pre-existing in the mind, are all, the subjects of their study. In short, they are wholly taken up with noticing, comparing, classifying and naming, or describing their sensations, no matter by what they may be excited. As to the method which they follow, is almost exclusively that of observation. Their senses are the instruments they use, and these are employed for the gratification of an insatiable curiosity, upon every thing

which comes *within the sphere of their observation*. With regard to things remote, either as to time or space, they are comparatively indifferent. They are wholly occupied with the present moment and the present spot. *Now and here*, are their starting points, from which they go off gradually and in all directions, like the successive widenings of a circle in the water. Even were an angel to visit our world, subjected as we are, to the necessity of cultivating an acquaintance with it through the medium of senses, he would have to begin, and advance except perhaps with greater rapidity, precisely as does the infant of a year. All the knowledge we possess in the world, relates either to things as they are, or as they affect each other; to their properties, or their changes; and as these properties have no dependence whatever on our will; and as these changes occur in obedience to laws imposed by God; the only possible method, by which we can acquire a knowledge of the one or of the other, is that of observation. It is this alone which furnishes us with materials for thought, as it is by this we are to test the correctness of our deductions.

From this it is to be inferred, that the business of the educator consists in simply taking up the lessons nature herself assigns and leaves unfinished, and in prosecuting them in the way prescribed by her own successful example. He will therefore, never consent to tie up, as it were, the senses of his pupil the moment he comes under his charge; to pin him down to a spot, and fasten his eyes immovably upon a book to learn by heart the thoughts of other minds. On the contrary, his first and highest aim will be to awaken his intellect, and stimulate it to voluntary interested effort. To accomplish this, he will intersperse his ordinary book and slate exercises with endeavors to excite curiosity by the presentation of some new object, it may be a plant, an animal, or a mineral, which the pupil will be required, or rather permitted, (for he will consider it a privilege) to observe, analyse and ultimately describe and classify with the aid of a text-book, or what is far better, the guidance of the living

instructor; and curiosity will beget desire which throws open all the avenues to the mind and rivets the attention. He will thus proceed in the treatment of the mind as the skilful physician and surgeon do in the treatment of the body. In the application of their remedies, they invariably have regard to the state of the system. To administer tonics before the cause of disease has been removed by active medicines, or to amputate a limb during the raging of a fever, would be alike fatal to the patient. It is just as important, nay, as *indispensable*, that the *state* of the pupil's *mind* should be attended to in our efforts to impart instruction. No one thinks of teaching a boy while he is asleep; but if he is inattentive, it is all one to his instructor whether he be so from sleep or want of interest. How then is interest to be excited? By books? By books alone? And what are books? Pieces of paper fastened together and covered with marks, the arbitrary representatives of certain sounds. But there is no awakening influence, no mental aliment in mere *unassociated* sound. It is only so far as sounds are made the suggesting representatives of *things*, that books can excite any interest or be of any service; or in other words, as reading is preceded, or accompanied by *observation*. This is the starting point, the foundation of all our knowledge; and to neglect it in the commencement of education, to rely exclusively, or even mainly upon books, is to do violence to nature. As well may you attempt by means of description alone, to impart an accurate idea of the world, to a man immured in a dungeon from his infancy. Let us be willing that children themselves shall show us how to teach them in the way that may be at once the most agreeable and useful. For this purpose we have only to fix our eyes upon the little inmates of a nursery, and watch the spontaneous, unconstrained manifestations of their intellects. The history of one such day's observations will do more to put us in the natural track of education, than all the abstract a priori reasoning of ages. The teacher's safest position is at the feet of nature, and his highest wisdom is to follow in her path.

Placed in the situation I have mentioned, let us single out one of the little company, and watch his every movement. Our first observation will be that he is incessantly employed. His hands, his feet, his eyes, his tongue are all in motion. His soul is in what he does; he works as for his life, and seems happy in his labor. But what is he doing? Limited as I am by my present purpose to the consideration of intellectual education, I may sum up all in one comprehensive answer; he is practising his senses. Again; place a boy in the midst of a Botanic garden, and how will he proceed if left to himself, in acquiring a knowledge of the things around him? Unquestionably his *hands* will be employed in plucking fruits and flowers; his *eye* in contemplating their colour, form, and size; his *nose* in enjoying their fragrance; and his *palate* in tasting their sweets. Introduce him next to an exhibition of wild beasts; and confine his eye if you can, to the pages of Goldsmith, that he may acquire a knowledge of the animals before him. Take him lastly into a cabinet of minerals; and if left at liberty; observing, handling, fracturing and experimenting, will be his exclusive and greedy employment. Now what is the world we live in but a vast Botanic garden, Menagerie and Mineralogical cabinet? And why should we in our efforts to impart a knowledge of its furniture and changes, employ in school, as is usually the case, a method so opposite to that which nature dictates and the scholar delights in? *We* attempt to teach by words alone; *nature* always uses demonstration. Upon the demonstrative and experimental plan, the little student is interested and active; his senses are awake; every faculty of his mind is employed; and he *acquires* knowledge for himself; it is his own attainment, his own property, because the fruit of his own exertions. Upon the abstract plan of exclusive dependence upon books; his senses, the only avenues to his intellect are closed; his mind is torpid; and his memory alone of all his faculties, is employed in receiving as a *gratuity*, information which he can neither comprehend, appreciate, nor use after he has gained it.

The application of these principles would lead to practical arrangements that need to be specified and defended.

From the variety of objects to which the attention of children is directed in the school of nature, it is fairly inferable, that in the incipient stages of what may be called artificial education, their inquiries should not be restricted within narrow bounds. The minds of children are naturally discursive, and it is certainly unphilosophical to cramp or thwart their native tendencies. The wonderful success with which their studies are conducted during the first half dozen years of life, may relieve us from all apprehension that their minds will be distracted by diversity of employment. The power of fixing and confining the attention to a single object, is one of the fruits of ripened education; and it is irrational to demand the exercise of a habit, at a period, when the practice which is to produce it is but just commencing.

The branches therefore, to which the attention of boys should be directed during the first five or six years of their pupilage, may be just as numerous as are requisite to explain the objects and phenomena that come within their notice. I would much rather designate the studies of early boy-hood, by referring to the *things* of which a knowledge is desirable, than by citing the high sounding names of those sciences or classes of truths to which these objects have given birth. I would choose this course not only on account of its apparent modesty, but also for the purpose of exhibiting the sciences in their native simplicity; a simplicity, of which they have become divested in the conceptions of most persons, by the fact of their being reserved (*even as to their elementary truths*, which must be learned by observation;) for the attention of the student in the most advanced stage of his education. To place a piece of limestone in the hands of a boy, and to require him to describe it according to its opacity or transparency, its lustre, hardness, frangibility &c.; to make him pulverize a portion of it, put it into a retort, pour on sulphuric acid and thereby disengage the gas of which it is in part composed; to cause him to try the effects of this gas

upon combustion and animal life, by immersing in it a lighted taper and a mouse, would not offend the judgment of the most fastidious; but to pretend to put the same boy to the study of Mineralogy and Chemistry, branches of science which, if attended to at all, are usually reserved for the Junior and Senior years of college life; might appear preposterous in the extreme.

Following out this principle to its practical bearings, it would obviously require that all those branches of science which consist of the knowledge that has been acquired respecting the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, should (at least so far as their more prominent truths, or what may be called their frame-work is concerned) be made the subject of attention during the stage of education under consideration. These three great departments of nature constitute the world in which we have to live and act, and from which we have to derive the means of prolonging our existence. That a familiar acquaintance with them therefore, is desirable, nay even indispensable, does not require proof; and that they should be studied at the time specified, will appear still more probable from the fact, that they can be successfully studied only by means of observation and experiment, the methods by which the work of education in its incipient stages should chiefly be conducted.

These are evidently recommended by the example of nature, for there is no stronger propensity observable in children than that of subjecting all things to the scrutiny of their senses; and particularly of making them undergo a *practical* examination in *their own hands*. Present an interesting object to the notice of a child, and he not only wants to see it, smell or taste it, as the case may require; but not content to examine it at a distance, he is satisfied only by being permitted to take it in his hand, that he may turn it and experiment upon it as he pleases. Now if there can be deduced from an observation of the native intellectual propensities of children, a method of instruction by which they will become delighted and successful learners, is it not the

part of wisdom in the teacher to appropriate this method? The first and indispensable point to be gained by the instructor, is to excite the mind of his pupil to interested effort. Until this be done, his exertions will be fruitless. How shall he accomplish it? By means of books alone? The notorious drudgery of their task-work haunts the memory even in the days of man-hood. Our school-boy recollections on this subject can never be obliterated. But let him substitute in the room of them, an excursion into the woods, to study trees and flowers; (the text-book may go along as a companion,) or a visit to a travelling Menagerie; (here again the book will be in place as an *auxiliary*,) or let him put into the hands of the juvenile philosopher a mineral; and let him stand by and *direct* the performance of such experiments as shall evolve the properties of the substance; and *experience assures me*, that the time or patience of the teacher will not be long enough to gratify his insatiable curiosity.

It must not be inferred from this that I propose to exclude books from participating in the work of early education. I would merely limit them to their proper place, and their appropriate office. I would use them as I use a spy-glass or a microscope; to *aid*, not to supersede the operation of the senses. Books every one must acknowledge, are invaluable and indispensable instruments in the work of education. As it is but a very small portion of the world that is subjected to the notice of any individual, we must of necessity be indebted to books for much the larger part of our information; but to be of any service, they *must* be employed in connection with, or subsequently to observation. To make them substitutes for this, is in the highest degree injurious. That observation should go before or accompany reading, is the order of nature, for which there is a moral necessity that cannot be evaded. Constituted as we are, there is no other foundation for our knowledge. The doctrine of innate ideas is no longer maintained by any one. All philosophers agree that for the whole of our knowledge we are indebted *directly* or *indirectly* to sensation. Every thing in the universe is

foreign to our minds, and it is the ordination of Heaven, that they shall hold converse with things external, not immediately, or as it were by direct contact; but mediately, that is through the agency of sensible organs located in the body. We could not have gained even so much as a conception of the existence of an external world in any other way, and as the contents of books are nothing more than the reported observations of others together with reflections founded on them, we are not prepared to derive benefit from using them, until we have made extensive and accurate observations for ourselves.

Hence we infer the expediency and necessity of making the first part of education as *demonstrative* and *practical* as possible; and did time allow, it were easy to prove that this is practicable with regard to the elements of every branch of science, moral as well as physical, which it is desirable that boys should study.

The adoption of the method of elementary education which has been described, is not only forced upon us by a necessity founded in our nature, but is recommended by numerous and very important advantages.

As has already been observed, it is calculated to relieve intellectual labour of every thing like drudgery, and make it at once agreeable and voluntary. Its tendency in this respect is very much aided by the vivacity of the colloquial mode of teaching, which, to a great extent at least, is necessarily adopted in its execution.

It is favorable to accuracy. This invaluable quality is attainable in no other way. Which is the most likely to form a correct idea of a country; the traveller who visits it, or the person who reads his description? What painter would stake his reputation upon a portrait or a landscape drawn from description? All ideas founded upon mere hear-say, are necessarily vague and comparatively unsafe. He whose knowledge is principally derived from books, sees with others' eyes and hears with others' ears. At the very best, he but takes observation at second hand. His opinions may be right, but this depends on the infallibility of his informer.

The method of education recommended, affords the only way in which to make independent thinkers. The individual whose knowledge is founded upon, or is accordant with his observations, has confidence in the correctness of his own opinions, and dares to ask the reasons for the opinions of others, and to suspend belief, until conviction, (an involuntary state of mind) is coerced by evidence. Most of the errors with which the world abounds, are the result of too hasty a credulity.

Facts ascertained or tested by observation, form the only foundation for a habit of correct reasoning. If we analyse any process of reasoning whatever, we shall discover in it but three elements. First, there must be facts; secondly, these facts must be related; lastly, there is the conclusion, or inference. It is too obvious therefore to require proof, that a chain of reasoning based on erroneous or irrelevant premises, must lead to wrong conclusions. Hence the importance, (an importance with regard to which exaggeration is impracticable,) of so conducting early education, that things whose truth is admitted by the pupil, shall really be facts, and that they sustain to each other the relations supposed. Our observations in early life form the basis of all the subsequent operations of our mind; hence the safe and healthy action of all the intellectual faculties, depends entirely upon the accuracy with which those observations are made which constitute the rudiments of future thought.

The education of a person should have reference and be adapted to the circumstances in which he is to live and act. The present period of the world may, with regard to knowledge, be denominated the age of discovery. Truth is as yet but very partially and imperfectly known. Since much then remains to be discovered, the habit of invention should be early formed; and as we are constantly liable to confound truth with error, the habit of cautious discrimination should be cultivated; and minute, exact observation is the only basis of both these habits.

The tendency of this method of preliminary instruction

would be, to make education thorough and practical. It must be thorough, because the student is permitted to attend to nothing which he is not enabled by demonstration, or experiment to understand. This is the all-pervading principle of the system. It must make education practical, because it requires that truth shall be always contemplated, as it were at home, *in its native residence in things*. Chemical truth it causes the pupil to study in the Laboratory, Dye-house, Tannery &c.; mechanical truth, in factories and workshops; mathematical truth, in the measurement of surfaces and solids; political truth, in the organization of society; intellectual truth, in the operations of his own and other's minds; moral and religious truth, in the lives and actions of individuals.

Education upon this plan, would be far more extensive than it usually is. This would be rendered practicable in part by the saving of time which must result from the amazing influence which the demonstrative and experimental plan has in facilitating, and consequently accelerating, the acquisition of knowledge. To be made fully to appreciate its superior efficacy in this respect, an individual need only attempt the study of anatomy, first by means of books alone, and then with the presence of a human skeleton, and the use of the dissecting knife—or of the mechanical properties of the atmosphere, first without, and then with the aid of the air-pump and its appendages.

Lastly, and for reasons just given; upon the plan proposed, *liberal* education would become much more widely disseminated than it is at present, and be brought within the reach of classes of society who are now precluded its advantages.

In conclusion of this address, I beg leave to say a few words on the policy and prospects of the Academical Department of Transylvania University at the present time. I will not disguise it, that I conceive we are trying an experiment. Other institutions have been known to *sustain* themselves by their inherent strength; but Morrison College has to demonstrate that an institution after repeated failures

under much more advantagious circumstances, can force itself into prosperity almost without resources, and in despite of numerous and appalling difficulties. What is to be the issue of the experiment in which we have embarked, I shall not venture to predict; but thus much I advance with confidence; that if the executive officers are left free to act in accordance with the dictates of the genuine policy of the institution, I shall entertain no fears about the result.

What that policy is, at least according to my judgment, I shall state, by enumerating some of its more prominent and comprehensive features.

In the first place; circumstances of commanding force enjoin it upon the guardians of the College, to exert themselves with all the assiduity and wisdom they can command, to conciliate public opinion; and to neutralize the force of popular prejudice which at present stands as a mountain in our path. And this can be done. To determine how, let us inquire into the nature and cause of this prejudice.

Again and again, have contributions been gained for Transylvania on the ground that it is a State Institution. And the plea was well founded; but the mass of the people did not appreciate the indirect, yet powerful advantage resulting to the entire community from the thorough education of even a small proportion of its youth. Hence arose an impression that it is a school for the benefit of the rich, in which the poor, or the great body of the people have no concern whatever. This is the prejudice we have to encounter, and if possible allay. How shall we proceed? The answer is obvious. Our course is plain. Let us endeavor henceforward to bring the energies of Transylvania into practical alliance with the interests of popular education. Let us make her in reality, what she has always professed to be in theory, a State Institution; the property of the people, consulting and promoting the intellectual welfare of the entire people. A State University, ought to be the head of a series of institutions adapted to the several stages of mental development; and as such should sustain a friendly and saluta-

ry connexion with schools of every grade throughout the State. The Faculty of the University ought to be regarded, and ought to regard themselves, as State property; whom teachers and parents every where should feel free to consult, and who should consider it a privilege to be permitted to advise respecting the education of every child in the community. Let us establish in connection with Transylvania a department for educating teachers, and let us proffer its advantages to all who aspire after respectable qualifications for this most important office; let us try to make it the interest of those already engaged in the arduous work of instruction, annually to assemble within her walls for the purpose of mutual improvement, and to avail themselves of the advantages of such lectures and on such subjects as they themselves shall desire; and finally let us found an intelligence office, through which neighborhoods whether remote or near, may communicate with teachers, and teachers in search of employment, be made acquainted with existing openings; thus endeavouring to promote our own interest, by the sure and unexceptionable method of taking pains to promote the interest of others.

Secondly. In order to multiply probabilities of patronage and success for Transylvania, we must to a much greater extent, adapt the character of the education she affords, to the wants and demands of the country. To accomplish this, we must bring forward and treat as in the highest degree important several branches of science which have hitherto been almost entirely neglected; I mean the natural sciences. Were there no other argument to recommend to us the study of chemistry, geology, mineralogy and botany; we find sufficient inducement to assign them a prominent place in our catalogue of studies, in the fact, that these are sciences of which agriculture, the great, the all absorbing interest of the western country is the art. I am far from being inclined to try to lessen in the conception of any one, the importance of classical and mathematical learning. I am happy to believe that the dead languages are in not the slightest danger

of being banished from our western colleges. With regard to their importance, public sentiment is advancing; but to maintain their ground, it will be found that they must moderate their exclusive claims, and admit along side of them studies which the circumstances of the country at the present most urgently, and will I trust, ere long imperatively demand. There is no unwillingness to admit that the study of Latin and Greek constitutes a part, and a most valuable part of education; but the homely, practical taste of the farming West, will give no quarter to the idea that an acquaintance with these, forms the whole of education.

We must also seek to make education more practical. I want the reproach no longer to be heard, that college graduates are not qualified to perform the office of store boys, nor to do the ordinary marketing of their father's families, without studying anew the very elements of arithmetic. I wish henceforth never to hear uttered against Transylvania, the mortifying complaint of respectable farmers, that after expending hundreds of dollars to have their sons taught geometry, trigonometry, mensuration &c., they are unable to tell them the length of a standing tree, the area of a field, or the solid contents of a wagon body, or a corncrib; and never, never, may our ears be grated with the painful declaration, that one of our graduates had received so little practice in composition, as actually to be unable to write an ordinary note or letter, without bad spelling, and with not much better sense.

Thirdly. But my main—I had almost said my only dependence for the permanent resuscitation of the college, is on what I trust is the firm, inflexible, and unanimous determination of its Faculty, to merit and achieve success by virtue of superior intellectual workmanship. Let us intrepidly resolve to place no confidence whatever in any thing as a substantial durable basis of literary reputation, but thorough genuine scholarship. Let us never consent to have our prosperity measured by so precarious and fluctuating a criterion as the length of a catalogue. But let us ever bear

in mind that to succeed upon these principles, will require arduous persevering labour. I would therefore call upon the friends of Transylvania with solemn earnestness, to repress extravagant expectations with regard to splendid or immediate results. Remember I beseech you, that we are called upon, as it were to replant the seeds of literature; and that we have need of long and patient waiting before we can expect to reap the harvest. Let then, ours be the deliberate aim of laying a foundation, which even should we be denied the privilege of raising the superstructure, need not be taken up and laid anew; but will constitute so much of a start for our more privileged successors. From the necessity of the case imposed upon us by the prostrate condition of the institution, and the low grade of scholarship in the country, ours must be the comparatively humble and laborious task of doing preparatory work. Do not require of us then to reverse the order of things prescribed by nature, by demanding of us finished workmanship before you have allowed us time to rough-hew the material. We wish to impress it strongly and indelibly upon the minds of our students, that their attainments are emphatically worthless, unless they become thorough in whatever they attempt. At our morning and evening devotions in the chapel; on entering and leaving the recitation room; in casual conversation as well as in the set lecture; I would incessantly sound it in the ears of every student; whatever the impediments, or let the consequences be what they may—*be thorough*. If they cannot, or will not take time to accomplish our entire course of studies in this manner, then let us not hesitate to abridge the *amount* of our requirements. I would infinitely rather give them their diplomas for an accurate, ample and practical acquaintance with one or two subjects, than for a speculative, confused and half formed knowledge of twenty. The knowledge gained in this case will not only be worth something, but the habits generated and fostered by such a method of study will enable them on leaving us, to acquire copious and available information upon any subject untouched in the college course.

Finally. Before concluding this address, I would most earnestly, though briefly, call upon our fellow citizens to co-operate with us in the arduous attempt to revive our fallen institution. Do you ask me how? I answer; second the efforts that may be made, to cherish a literary spirit in our place—take a noble pride in your rising institutions—continue and even increase your habits of generous hospitality—and above all, purify the moral atmosphere of your city, and never suffer the interesting youth whom we invite among us to become the prey of the black-leg, or the debauchee. Are you a parent? Have you learned the intensity of a parent's hopes—a parent's fears? Do you know from experience the value of a child? Has your son ever been subjected to moral exposure away from home? Has he met with some kind friend who has adopted him into his family; introduced him into profitable society; noticed his progress in his studies; cheered and stimulated him by his approbation; nursed him in his sickness; befriended him in his difficulties? Then all I ask for the generous youth entrusted to my care, is, that you “Do for others what you would have them do for you.”

